

Montague Energy Committee Minutes 11 25 2025

Present: Sally Pick, Tim Van Egmond, Ray Sebold, Jason Burbank, David Dempsey, Pam Hanold, Chris Nolan-Zeller

Designate facilitator: Tim **and scribe:** David

Chris Nolan-Zeller updates:

The Select Board reduced the size of the Energy Committee to 7 members, so only 4 members need to be present to constitute a quorum.

The updated Road Maps for 3 town buildings are done. He expects that rest will be complete by June 2026.

Sally reports that Chris Mason told her we have to get the Road Maps done before we can apply for Climate Leader Community (CLC). She also followed up on several leads to track down cost differentials between the Special Stretch Code and the Stretch Code.

Research showed that the proposal to add water power generation at the Clean Water Facility was not practical.

Green Communities grants paid a partial rebate for the installation of the Charging Stations and the purchase of the EV vehicles by the town. Chris Nolan Zeller will ask Chris Mason for more details on support for purchasing EV vehicles.

Chris spoke with the building inspector, Bill Ketchen, about feedback from builders around the idea of the Specialized Stretch Code. He noted several concerns; potential added expense especially in uncertain inflationary times, lack of trust in the efficiency of heat pumps in colder temperatures, resistance to “being told what to do” by the bureaucracy.

State & federal level energy-related policies & legislation updates.

Sally reports that Representative Cusak has filed a bill that would roll back many of the programs needed to move to clean energy. The bill is delayed until after January 1, 2026.

Eversource wants more batteries to absorb peak production from PV systems to make it available to reduce peak demands.

The state is considering setting up a Green Bank. Sally reports that in Connecticut for every dollar the state offers it leverages 8 dollars in private funding. She will distribute information to the committee so that we can respond.

Community Planning For Solar with U. Mass. Clean Energy Extension

Ray has been studying the layout of the 3 phase electrical system in the town to determine what areas might be used for larger solar PV or battery installations. Most areas are under agricultural protection easements. However there are a few sites along Route 63 that might be viable. One is the Sirum Equipment Company site. The other is on the west side of the road under the power lines that go east-west bordered on the south by Lake Pleasant Rd. and the out flow of Lake Pleasant on the west.

Schools and Energy

There were questions about any impact that the possible joining of the Pioneer and the Gill-Montague regional schools might have in terms of new buildings or renovations.

Helping Town Prioritize Energy-Saving Projects for Upcoming State & Federal Grants

Pam also brought up the possibility of looking into any potential development of the old Farren site and whether heat exchangers could be set up in the discharge water to capture energy for any heat pumps at the site.

The rest of the Agenda Items Below were Tabled

Further Planning and Preparation for putting ZEV First policy in place

Eversource Smart Meters now being installed. • Article on how consumers can use them to lower electricity costs?

Energy Related Town Facility Updates

Energy Saver Home Loan Program (ESHLP) and promotion of program

Other topics not reasonably anticipated 48 hours in advance of meeting

Announcements

Next Meeting: January 27, 2026